

***Status of the Claims***

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1 - 18 (cancelled).

19. (New) A method, comprising:

providing first and second probes each having a respective elongated nozzle;

scanning the first probe over a reference surface to produce successive reference values, such that a size of an opening of the elongated nozzle allows for an entire area of the reference surface adjacent the first probe during the scanning to be measured by substantially eliminating low sensitivity areas;

scanning the second probe over a measured surface to produce successive measured values, such that a size of an opening of the elongated nozzle allows for an entire area of the measured surface adjacent the second probe during the scanning to be measured by substantially eliminating low sensitivity areas; and

determining a topography of the measured surface based on a difference between respective ones of the successive measured values and respective ones of the successive reference values.

20. (New) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

producing a uniform sensitivity footprint based on the shape and size of the opening of the elongated nozzle.

21. (New) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

providing the respective elongated nozzles having a width to length ratio of about 2:1.

22. (New) The method of claim 19, further comprising:  
providing the respective elongated nozzles having a width to length ratio  
of about 10:1.

23. (New) The method of claim 19, further comprising:  
providing the respective elongated nozzles having a width to length ratio  
of about 20:1.

24. (new) The method of claim 19, further comprising:  
providing the respective elongated nozzles having a width to length ratio  
of between about 2:1 to about 20:1.